



West Nile Virus Newsletter

This is an electronic publication designed to keep you informed on issues of interest related to West Nile virus (WNV) in Washington, and provide current information to assist you in developing a response plan to WNV in your jurisdiction.

Surveillance News

The following information summarizes WNV surveillance data reported to CDC through the national reporting system (ArboNET) as of July 23, 2003.

During the week of July 17-23, six human cases of WNV infection were reported from five states (Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Texas). During the same period, WNV infections were reported in 309 dead corvids (crows and related species), 69 other dead birds, 12 horses, and 144 mosquito pools.

During 2003, a total of 11 human cases of WNV infection have been reported, five from Texas and one each from Alabama, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, South Carolina, and South Dakota. In addition, 551 dead corvids and 150 other dead birds with WNV infection were reported from 34 states; 55 WNV infections in horses have been reported from 16 states, including Wyoming, and one WNV infection was reported in a dog in South Dakota. Seroconversions in 56 sentinel flocks from Florida, Iowa and North Carolina, and 327 WNV-positive mosquito pools from 15 states have been reported.

Late Breaking Information: An Alabama woman in her 80s has become the first person in the nation this year to die from WNV, according to Alabama state health officials. CDC has not yet confirmed this.

Additional information about WNV activity is available at:
Center for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dybid/westnile/> and
http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/research/west_nile/west_nile.html

Mexico on Alert

Officials in Mexico have recently declared a state of emergency against WNV declaring it a severe risk to the horse population and a growing threat to people. WNV was first discovered in Mexico on May 16, 2003 in a dead crow in Tabasco State, and has since spread to horses in seven other states in Mexico.

West Nile Web Pages a Hit!

The Department of Health (DOH) WNV Web site received approximately 13,500 visits from April through June 2003, an average of about 4,500 per month. This ranks the site as the second most popular in Environmental Health Programs for this time period and in the top ten for all DOH sites in May and June. The most frequently visited sites were the Question and Answer pages on general WNV information, personal protection, and dead bird reporting followed closely by the 2003 surveillance map and the page on the general NPDES permit for mosquito control.

Mosquito Focus – *Ochlerotatus dorsalis*

Ochlerotatus dorsalis is the only species that breeds naturally in brackish or saltwater environments as well as freshwater habitats. It is found in largest numbers in tidal marshes on the coast; but also occurs in a variety of freshwater habitats including marshes, irrigated farmlands, flooded grasslands, and temporary pools.

Females deposit batches of eggs in moist soil that is exposed to periodic flooding. Eggs hatch after flooding during the first warm weather in spring. Some do not hatch on first flooding, providing eggs that will hatch during subsequent floodings. This allows emergence of adults and breeding to be continuous throughout the warm season, which can begin in March and last until freezing in October or early November. Larvae are most often found in shallow, grassy water exposed to direct sunlight. The species overwinters as eggs.

Ochlerotatus dorsalis is recognized as an important pest species in Western North America and humans and large mammals are the preferred hosts. It will also feed on large birds. It is a vicious biter that will attack any time day or night. It is also a strong flier having been traced as far as 30 miles from its' breeding site. The species has been implicated as a vector of California Encephalitis and Western Equine Encephalitis.

Local Health Focus – Walla Walla County-City Health Department

Submitted by Walla Walla County-City Health Department

The Walla Walla County-City Health Department WNV program is focused on surveillance and a comprehensive education component. The department has established a countywide dead bird surveillance network and is also active in trapping mosquitoes for identification. The recently established mosquito control district in Touchet is also participating in the mosquito surveillance effort.

Educational activities have included active participation of the local media in distributing general WNV information and personal protection messages. The department has also prepared information for health care providers, developed a list serve with local veterinarians, and assisted public works, parks, and other city staff with basic information on mosquito control. An effort is currently underway to train commercial applicators on completing the permit application for mosquito control, so they can assist property owners who wish to apply.

General Permit Challenged

A challenge regarding the Department of Ecology's (Ecology) extension of coverage to DOH of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) general permit for aquatic mosquito control was filed with the Pollution Control Hearings Board. The case is *Jerry Lee Dierker v. Departments of Ecology and Health*, PCHB No. 03-057. The Attorney General's Office has sent letters to those whose Application and Agreement for Coverage to proceed with mosquito control activity has been accepted by the DOH, informing them of the challenge.

The appellant, Mr. Dierker, asked the Board to suspend Ecology's extension of coverage to the DOH until the case was heard and ruled on, but the Board denied that request. Currently, Ecology's extension of coverage to DOH remains valid. Motions to dismiss or other dispositive motions are due on August 8, 2003. If the case is not resolved as a result of these motions, a hearing may be held on October 22, 2003. If the case is not heard on October 22, it will be heard on March 10, 2004.

Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health Act Approved

The federal Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health Act was passed by congress and sent to President Bush for signature. The Act provides for CDC to make grants to states or political subdivisions thereof for establishing and operating mosquito control programs. One hundred million dollars was appropriated for fiscal year 2003. The grants would require matching funds not less than one-third total costs, which could be cash or in kind including plant, equipment, or services. Contact Jack Lilja at (360) 236-3366, jack.lilja@doh.wa.gov for more information.

Article Submission

We are interested in receiving articles for future publications of the WNV newsletter. Please submit articles to Jack Lilja, jack.lilja@doh.wa.gov.

Community Comments

Let us hear your comments on this newsletter, your needs, or things you would like to see, by sending them to Maryanne Guichard, (360) 236-3391 or maryanne.guichard@doh.wa.gov.

WNV Web Resources

Washington State Department of Health www.doh.wa.gov/wnv
Center for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/>
Washington State University Cooperative Extension <http://wnv.wsu.edu/>
Cornell University, Center for Environment <http://www.cfe.cornell.edu/erap/WNV>

DOH Contact List for West Nile Virus

General Public Toll-Free Hotline 1-866-78VIRUS

Publications: Brochures/Response Plan/Fact Sheets

Laura Harper, (360) 236-3380, or laura.harper@doh.wa.gov.

Surveillance: Mosquito

Jo Marie Brauner, (360) 236-3064, or jomarie.brauner@doh.wa.gov.

Surveillance: Dead bird surveillance and general WNV response

Tom Gibbs, (360) 236-3060, or tom.gibbs@doh.wa.gov.

Surveillance: Horses, case reporting, laboratory assistance

Dr. John Grendon, (360) 236-3362, or john.grendon@doh.wa.gov.

NPDES: Training, technical assistance

Ben Hamilton, (360) 236-3364, or benjamin.hamilton@doh.wa.gov.

WNV in Humans: Clinical information, case reporting, and laboratory testing

Call your local health jurisdiction or DOH Communicable Disease Epidemiology,
(206) 361-2914 or (877) 539-4344.

Assistance with news releases and media response

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To subscribe to this newsletter

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